

5804 c12

AN
AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT
OF THE LATE UNFORTUNATE
DOCTOR WILLIAM DODD,
CONTAINING THE
MOST INTERESTING ANECDOTES
OF HIS
LIFE AND WRITINGS
AND ALL THE
MATERIAL CIRCUMSTANCES
OF HIS
T R I A L,
AND BEHAVIOUR
BOTH IN PRISON,
AND ON THE
DAY OF EXECUTION.
TOGETHER WITH
THE DECLARATION,
WHICH HE DELIVERED TO THE
ORDINARY OF NEWGATE,
AT
T Y B U R N.
COLLECTED FROM THE BEST MATERIALS, BY
AN IMPARTIAL HAND.

“ Now he's view'd
Thro' the dim shade his fate casts o'er him.
A shade that spreads its ev'ning darkness o'er
His brightest virtues, while it shews his foibles
Crowding and obvious as the midnight stars,
Which, in the sunshine of prosperity,
Never had been desferied.”

LUCIAD.

ROCHESTER:
PRINTED BY T. FISHER, 1777.



DEC

U R N

ROCHESTER

PRINTED BY T. FISHER, 177A

AN
A C C O U N T
OF THE
L A T E U N F O R T U N A T E
DR. WILLIAM DODD.

THE frequency of public executions, has almost disarm'd them of their terror. Mankind read, with indifference, the periodical accounts of unhappy victims, sacrificed to the violated laws of their country. The rank and situation of the criminal, not being sufficient to engage the attention of the public, he dies unlamented; and his punishment, which is designed for an intimidation to others, in some measure, loses its effect.

But the sufferings of a late celebrated Divine, seem to have roused the feelings of mankind; and as, by the forfeiture of his life, he has attoned for the crime he had committed, it is to be hoped, that so striking an example, will not be altogether useless to the world. Having distinguished himself, both as a writer and a preacher, he was generally known, and as generally admired; therefore, has his fate been deplored; and it has been the wish of thousands, that

B

the

the rigour of justice could have been mitigated. But as the crime, for which he was condemned, is now become a growing evil, and that, of all others, the most pernicious to a commercial country, we must ascribe the confirmation of his sentence, not, it is charitably presumed, to a want of humanity, but to a political motive; otherwise, the rank he held in life; his abilities, learning and philanthropy; and lastly, his making restitution to the party injured, might, surely, have pleaded in his favour, and the earnest request of his numerous petitioners, been attended with success.

Without repeating the various censures which have been passed on this unfortunate man; against whom the tongue of scandal has not been idle, let it be sufficient to observe, that by too great a compliance with the fashionable dissipation of the times, he incurred expences which he could but ill support; and, in one unguarded moment, plunged into guilt, in order to remove a temporary embarrassment. Instead, therefore, of aspersing his memory with cruel reflections, let us rather consider him as a dreadful example of human infirmity; from which may be inferred two very useful maxims: — That extravagance and a neglect of those prudential rules, in the conduct of life, (which men of genius are too apt to disregard) generally terminate in distress; and that great circumspection in our conduct is necessary, lest, in the hour of imagined security, we are overcome by the temptations which surround us: — and that this awful event may make the greater impression on the mind, let us turn from these reflections, to the person who occasioned them; and relate the following narrative of his life.



Dr.

DR. WILLIAM DODD, was the son of a clergyman, who, for many years, was vicar of Bourne, in Lincolnshire. He was born in the year 1729. When young, he was sent to the University of Cambridge, and entered of Clare-Hall, where he was distinguished by the brightness of his parts, and attention to his studies. He soon discovered a taste for poetry. In the year 1747, he published a Pastoral, entitled, *Diggon Davy's Resolution on the Death of his last Cow*, in order to convince a friend, that the distemper which then prevailed amongst the horned cattle, had been described by Virgil. This appears to have been the first effort of his genius; at least, the first with which he favoured the public.

In the year 1748, he published a few trifling pieces of poetry, on domestic occurrences. In the year following, 1749, a very remarkable incident gave rise to two epistles, written in a very animated stile, which laid the foundation of his reputation as a writer.—The circumstance is as follows:

The captain of a trading vessel, who used to traffic on the coast of Africa, went up the country, where he was introduced to a moorish king, of considerable power and opulence. The prince, captivated with the polite behaviour of the English, entertained them with the greatest civility; and at last reposed such confidence in the captain, as to entrust him with his son, about eighteen years of age; and another youth, to be brought to England, and educated in the European manner. He received them under his care; but, abusing his trust, basely sold them for gain. This sordid wretch soon after died; and upon the arrival of the ship in England, the officers related the whole affair; on which the government sent to pay their ransom; they were brought to England, and

put under the care of the Earl of Halifax, then first commissioner of trade and plantations, who had them cloathed and educated in a genteel manner. They were introduced to the king, richly dressed in an European habit; and, some months afterwards, were baptized at the Temple Church, by Mr. Terrett, reader of the Temple, who undertook to instruct them in the Christian Faith.—During their stay in England, they frequently appeared at the theatres, and were once present at the performance of *Oroonoko*; when, seeing persons of their own colour, on the stage, apparently in the same distress, from which they had been so lately relieved, the tender interview between Imoinda and Oroonoko, who relates his sufferings, in consequence of his being betrayed, by the treachery of a captain, so strongly affected them, with that generous grief, which pure nature always feels, that the young prince was obliged to retire at the end of the fourth act. His companion remained until the conclusion, but wept the whole time,

Upon this subject Mr. Dodd wrote two epistles, which were soon after published, and addressed to the Earl of Halifax, which are universally allowed to possess considerable merit, and to rank very high as literary performances.

The year following, having made some progress in translating the *Hymns of Callimachus*, he put forth proposals for printing them. He continued in the college that year, during the vacation, and wrote a humorous mock Heroic Poem, entitled, *A Day of Vacation at College*, in which he describes a College-life, at that season of the year.—This Poem was published in 1751.

In

In 1730, he translated the 18th Book of *Telemachus*, as a specimen of the whole work ; but other employments prevented him from prosecuting it. He does not appear to have published any thing, besides the Poem before-mentioned, in the year 1751, except an *Elegy on the Death of Frederic Prince of Wales, the Father of his present Majesty*. In the latter part of this year, or beginning of the subsequent one, Mr. Dodd was ordained : soon after which, he left Cambridge, having only taken the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and came up to London, where he was soon distinguished as a celebrated preacher ; and in April he obtained the lectureship of *West-Ham and Bow*.

He seems, at this period of his life, to have devoted his whole attention to the duties of his clerical profession ; and the success which attended his endeavours, was sufficient to encourage him to continue the same ardour in pursuit of the highest degree of excellence, for the attainment of which, he possessed every natural and acquired requisite. Whenever he was known to preach, the church was always crowded with an admiring and attentive audience. His person was calculated to command respect ; his voice was harmonious, and his elocution graceful and energetic. He was then thought to incline to the Hutchinsonian system. He acknowledged, that he once entertained a good opinion of the notions of Mr. Hutchinson ; but, after a more impartial examination, he had reason to think otherwise. The Methodists also flattered themselves with expectations of seeing him declare himself an espouser of their doctrines : but that their expectations were ill-founded, appears from a Sermon which he printed, entitled, *Cautions against Methodism ; or Unity recommended*.

In 1752, he published *The Beauties of Shakespeare, regularly selected from each Play, in two Volumes* : He then

then declared in his preface, that he should resign all pursuits of the like kind, for objects of greater importance, and which demanded his most serious attention.

In the year 1753, he published a Poem, entitled, *An Epistle to a Lady, concerning some important and necessary Truths in Religion*, in which he has drawn several real characters. This year he was appointed *Lecturer of St. James's, Garlick-Hill*.

His popularity continued to increase with his industry and application: he now printed by subscription, *four Volumes of Sermons on the Miracles and Parables*: and about the year 1754, he was chosen *Lecturer of St. Olave's, Hart-Street*.

In the year 1755, he published his Translation of *The Hymns of Callimachus, translated from the Greek, into English Verse, with explanatory Notes*; to which are added, *Select Epigrams, and the Coma Berenices of the same author: Six Hymns of Orpheus; and the Encomium of Ptolemy, by Theocritus*. He was, at this time, taken notice of by *Dr. Keene, then Bishop of Chester, but now of Ely*, who, having conceived a good opinion of Mr. Dodd, at the University, was desirous of assisting him, as a young man of abilities and character.

His next publications were, *The Sinful Christian condemned by his own Prayers, a Sermon.—The Nature and Necessity of Fasting, being the substance of two Sermons.—These were preached at West-Ham, and St. Olave's*. He also published the following small pieces, with an intention to distribute them amongst the poor. — *The Church Catechism explained after a new Method; with Proofs from Scripture, subjoined to every Article.—An earnest Address to his Parishioners, by a Minister of the Church of England, concerning the necessity, means and marks, of true Faith in Christ Jesus.*

Jesus.—A Word of Advice to Sureties in Baptism; being a short Extract from a Sermon on that Subject.—The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice, extracted from Dr. Brevent.

In 1757, he visited Southampton, and there wrote *Thoughts on the Glorious Epiphany of the Lord Jesus Christ, a Poetical Essay*; which he published in 1758. The subject of this Poem is serious and important; not calculated to please the gay, the thoughtless and profane; or written for those who read only to amuse an idle hour. The serious and well-disposed Christian may peruse it with instruction, and their hearts be kindled with a greater love for their Eternal Inheritance.

On the 11th of June, in this year, he preached a Sermon, which he afterwards published, on, *The People's Duty, when the Host is gone forth against the Enemy.*

We are next to consider him in a very amiable point of view, in which he had an opportunity of exercising his benevolent disposition. Several of our public institutions, which were charitably intended for the benefit of mankind, are much indebted to him for their support. If he has been guilty of indiscretions, and, at last, involved himself in guilt; he has also performed such actions of beneficence, as entitle him to pity, if not, respect. The *Author of the Rambler*, in No. 107. of that celebrated work, having represented the deplorable condition of many miserable wretches, who, through youth, inexperience or passion, wandered from the paths of virtue, and whose inclination might prompt them to forsake the course into which they were seduced; but whose good intentions were disappointed by the want of shelter and protection; it induced many gentlemen to turn their attention to this subject; and, after several schemes

had

had been offered and considered, the plan of the present *Magdalen Hospital* was adopted, as liable to the least objection, and most likely to answer their benevolent design. Mr. Dodd was one of the first who undertook the support of this infant charity; he wrote many excellent papers in defence of it; he replied to all the objections that had been made against it; he procured subscriptions from his friends, and offered his assistance to preach at the Chapel belonging to the Hospital. By these means the place soon became the resort of people of fashion and distinction, and much money was collected at the doors, for the use of the charity. This Hospital was first opened in *Goodman's Fields*, on the the 10th of April, 1758; but has since been removed to *St. George's Fields*. The diligence and popularity of Mr. Dodd, greatly contribute to its success. He preached his first annual sermon before the governors, at St. Laurence's church near Guildhall, on the 26th of April, 1759; which was afterwards printed, with a preface, containing an account of the institution.—In the beginning of this year, he published *Bishop Hall's Meditations, in two volumes*. And he printed also, an Ode on the honour the Marquis of Granby had acquired in Germany, addressed to the Marchioness.

It has been already observed, that, from a sermon he published, entitled, *Cautions against Methodism, or Unity recommended*, it plainly appeared, that he did not espouse the doctrines of the Methodists; against which imputation, he defended himself, in the preface, with some warmth. This sermon was preached on Easter Monday, in the year 1759, before the *religious societies in and about London*. From this aspersions, he seems to have taken some pains to vindicate himself. In 1760 he was the publisher of *Original Letters between the Rev. Mr. John Wesley,*
and

and Mr. Richard Thompson, respecting the doctrine of assurance, as held by the former, wherein that tenet is fully examined, with some strictures on christian perfection. He preached three several times, in the years 1759, 1760, and 1761, before the company of apothecaries, on, *The wisdom and goodness of God in the vegetable creation*. These sermons have been published.

On the 27th of January 1760, he preached a sermon at the chapel of the Magdalen House before his *Royal Highness prince Edward*, which was also published. In this year came out a monthly performance, called *the Christian Magazine*; in which, if he was not the manager, he was a very large contributor to it. In this work was inserted, *Reflections on Death*. These he afterwards collected and published in a volume, dedicated to the Earl of Bute.

Dr. Squire, who, in 1760, was appointed *Bishop of St. David's*, had, in the year preceeding, published an excellent work, entitled, *Indifference for Religion inexcusable*. On the appearance of this performance, Mr. Dodd wrote a sonnet, addressed to the author, who was so well pleased with this mark of his attention, that some time after the Bishop's elevation, he appointed him his chaplain. In that year he collected in two volumes a series of papers, called, *The Visitor*, which had formerly been printed in the *Public Ledger*. He also published another polemical piece, entitled, *A conference between a Mystic, or Hutchinsonian, a Calvinist, a Methodist, and a member of the church of England and others; wherein the tenets of each are freely examined and discussed*. He also published, *An Account of the rise, progress, and present state of the Magdalen charity, to which were added two anniversary sermons, that he preached before*
C
the

the governors. This year he likewise published, *A familiar Explanation of the Poetical works of Milton; to which is prefixed Mr Addison's Criticism on Paradise Lost, with a preface.*

In the year 1760, his patron, *Bishop Squire* procured him the *Prebend of Brecon*. His reputation, as a writer, was now well established, and he meditated a design of publishing a large commentary on the Bible. In order to render this work more valuable, *Lord Masham* presented him with the MSS. of the great Mr. Locke, found in his lordship's library at Oates. This work made its appearance in 1765, which he began to publish in weekly and monthly numbers; and was completed in three volumes folio; but the sale of it did not answer the expectations of the author. Besides the assistance of Mr. Locke's MSS. he was favoured with other materials by the loan of manuscripts by *Dr. Waterland*, *Lord Clarendon*, *Gilbert West*, *Dr. Church*, and other celebrated writers.

In the spring of the year 1764, he accompanied *Bishop Squire* to *Brecknock*, and, while there, as a mark of his gratitude, wrote an Ode inscribed to his benefactor, expressive of the happiness and tranquility he enjoyed in that agreeable retreat. This year he published, *Comfort to the Afflicted under every distress, with suitable devotions*. And about this time, he was appointed chaplain to his majesty.

In 1766 died his friend and patron *Bishop Squire*, who appears to have held him in high estimation. He preached and printed a sermon on the occasion of his decease, with a Dedication to Mrs. Squire, in which he addresses her in the language of consolation, and pays a grateful tribute to the memory of his much respected benefactor.—In the course of this
year

year he gave the public the 5th edition of *Mr. Locke's Common-place-book to the Holy Bible, with improvements*. He also went to Cambridge, and took a degree of doctor of laws.

His next publication was a *Collection of his Poems*, and this was followed by a *Sermon preached at St. James's Westminster, April 9, 1767, before the governors of the Small Pox Hospital*, in which he recommended the practice of inoculation. It is replete with those pathetic descriptions, which he so frequently introduced into his discourses, and which never failed to melt his audience into tears. In this particular he excelled the most celebrated preachers of the times.

In 1769 he translated from the French of *M. Massillon, Bishop of Clermont, Sermons preached before Louis 15th. during his minority*. They were called, *Sermons on the duties of the great*, and were inscribed to the Prince of Wales.

In 1771 he published his much admired *Sermons to young men, in three volumes*. The thought of this publication, was suggested by Dr. Fordyce's *Sermons to young women*. To each sermon is annexed a variety of anecdotes, collected both from ancient and modern authors; intended to illustrate by pertinent examples, the subject of the preceeding discourses. They are dedicated to Philip Stanhope (now Earl of Chesterfield) and Charles Ernst, Esq. who had been his pupils.

He was presented, in the beginning of 1772, to the living of Hockliffe in Buckinghamshire.

In the Christian magazine, in 1764, was inserted, *A Proposal for the Relief of Prisoners for Debt*, This was written by Dr. Dodd, and laid the first foundation of the present society for the release of persons

persons confined in jail for debts of a small amount. In consequence of it, a meeting was held for the purpose of receiving contributions; and the promoters of this excellent charity were soon enabled to extend relief to great numbers, who must otherwise have dragged out a miserable existence, lost to themselves and to the community. He preached a sermon at the chapels in *Charlotte Street* and *Bedford Court*, for the benefit of this laudable institution, which afterwards appeared in print. About the same time he published a sermon, entitled, *The frequency of capital Punishments inconsistent with justice, sound policy and religion*. But that the author of this discourse should, in his own person, encrease the number of these *capital punishments*, was a circumstance, then, little to be suspected. At that time, he would have shuddered with horror, at the thought of his being capable of so atrocious a deed, as should incur such a severe penalty; yet such is the imperceptible progression of vice, that, from one degree of guilt to another, it loses its deformity, and becomes familiar to our minds, till we arrive at last, to the worst stages of it, and are ready to perpetrate such actions, as we had before persuaded ourselves, it was not possible for us to commit.

On the 27th of April 1773, he again exerted his talents for the advantage of another charity, in a sermon entitled, *Compassion to Infants enforced*, preached at the church of *St. Martin in the Fields*, before the *Presidents and Guardians of the Dispensary for the Infant Poor*.

About this period, Dr. Dodd resigned his lectureships of *Westham* and *St. Olave's* and engaged in schemes beyond his fortune to support. A chapel which was built in *Charlotte Street*, and others which

which he became a sharer in, are supposed not to have succeeded in a manner answerable to his expectations. The flattering distinction conferred upon him by a late nobleman, might also have excited in him romantic and visionary notions; and prompted him to launch out into extravagancies far beyond his income. Tho' so popular a preacher, he had no other benefices but what were given him by the Earl of Chesterfield; but the means he employed, in order to procure a valuable presentation, not only exposed him to contempt, but also discovered a great weakness of understanding. He soon experienced the effects of so ridiculous an expedient, as to offer a bribe to a person in the most exalted station in the kingdom, and that too, for an ecclesiastical preferment; against the express declaration of the statute. Not that we believe, but such bargains are too frequently negotiated; but the manner in which this business was conducted, entirely blasted every hope of his preferment, and depreciated the character which he had long held in the opinion of mankind. The circumstance is briefly this. The living of St. George's, Hanover Square, was likely soon to become vacant. It was at the disposal of the Lord Chancellor. An anonymous letter was sent to the Lady of that Nobleman, offering a sum of money, if, through her means Dr. Dodd might be appointed to it. If there was not positive, at least, there was sufficient evidence to prove, that he was well acquainted with the contents.—He is said to have laid the blame intirely on Mrs. Dodd, and to have declared, that the application was made without his knowledge. These declarations obtained no credit. The letter was given to the Chancellor, and by him delivered to his Majesty, who ordered Dr. Dodd's name to be struck out of the list

list of his chaplains. The press soon began to teem with satire and invective. The Doctor published a short letter in the *St. James's Chronicle*, desiring the candid public to suspend their opinion in his case, till he had an opportunity of elucidating this affair, evincing his integrity to the satisfaction of mankind, and removing every ill impression, with regard to the proceedings which had incensed a most respectable personage, and drawn such misfortunes upon him.— But the public would neither suspend nor alter their opinion. This apology only gave new edge to the pasquenades which were dispersed about. In the Summer, the transaction was, by Mr. Foote, made the subject of ridicule, in his play of the *Cozeners*, where Mrs. Dodd is introduced in the character of Mrs. Simony

About the time that he quitted his lectureships, being impatient of a situation which offered no prospect of promotion, he was engaged by Lord Chesterfield, whose affection for the graces is well known, as a proper tutor for his cousin and heir. Dr. Dodd's manners were polite;—his address easy and engaging; no small recommendations to the Earl. Elated by this mark of distinction, he engaged in the task without due consideration; and to accommodate his pupils, of whom he had several, besides Lord Chesterfield, took a large house in Southampton Row, where he lived several years. Before his dismissal from Court, the young Lord Chesterfield had come to his title and fortune! and he appears to have retained his regard for his tutor, notwithstanding this disgraceful stigma. The living of Winge, in Buckinghamshire, becoming vacant, he was presented to it in 1774, and was also appointed one of his lordship's chaplains.

At

At this time he seemed determined to efface the ill impressions which the world had received, by means of this unfortunate application; he placed himself foremost in the support of some newly-instituted charities. His assiduities for the support, relief, and discharge of persons imprisoned for small debts, have been already mentioned; neither were they unremitted.

He preached a Sermon in recommendation of the plan for recovering persons apparently drowned.—About this time, he was appointed chaplain to the Free Masons, and printed a speech made by him, on laying the foundation-stone of a building, belonging to them, in Queen-Street.

It will be clearly perceived, from the number and variety of Dr. Dodd's publications, that his industry has been very great, and his abilities not to be despised. If he does not rank with the first writers of the age, he is far from sinking to an equality with the numerous race, whose productions daily issue from the press. Had he confined his attention to one single branch of literature, without permitting his mind to wander over such a variety of subjects, it is probable, that he would have excelled in that department which he should have made choice of. It is certain, however, that without unremitted industry, he never could have executed so many works with any degree of credit; and some must be allowed to rise above mediocrity.

In the pulpit, he exerted his talents with the greatest success; there it was always in his power to convince, persuade, amuse, and instruct. He seemed to have uncontrouled authority over the human breast: and could, when he pleased, excite such passions as he wished to draw forth. His sermons, divested of the advantages of his own oratory, lose much
of

of the effect which they produced in their delivery, but still are to be considered as not unworthy the attention of mankind.

His poetical compositions were only to be esteemed as the mere amusements of an idle hour; and, indeed, he acknowledges himself, that he did not presume to affect the high character of a poet.

Though the preferments of Dr. Dodd were not of very considerable value, yet the profits arising from his publications were great. One of his first works had been a selection of the beauties of Shakespear, to whom he again turned his attention; having formed a design to print a new edition in a most pompous manner, and ornamented with the most elegant decorations. It is said, that this scheme, as it never was completed, was highly injurious to his fortune. To this undertaking many of his friends ascribe part of the necessities in which he was involved, and which tempted him to that fatal expedient to raise money, for which he suffered. In the Summer of the year 1776, he went to Paris, and during his stay in that city, was in treaty with several artists, who were to execute the plates of his intended edition.

Dr. Dodd, at no period of his life, was influenced by the rules of oeconomy. A mode of living far beyond the bounds of his income; a fondness for splendor and gaiety, and a total inattention to the maxims of worldly prudence, had contributed to embarrass his circumstances, and oblige him to have recourse to almost any means, to silence the importunities of creditors, and to extricate himself from those difficulties, which pressed upon him. Unhappily for him, the scheme of obtaining a sum of money by making use of Lord Chesterfield's name suggested itself to him, and the execution of it was at the
be-

beginning attended with success. A bond bearing date the 4th. of February 1777 was put into the hands of Lewis Robinson a broker, in order to raise the sum of £4200. Mess. Fletcher and Peach agreed to lend the same on the security proposed; which was accordingly delivered to them, and the money received. Mr. Manley, attorney to the lenders observing a blot in the bond, which had the appearance of design rather than accident, applied to Lord Chesterfield, for information whether he acknowledged the security to be his own execution. The signature was disowned by his lordship, and both Dr. Dodd, and Robinson the broker, were immediately secured, by a warrant from the Lord Mayor, and brought before him to be examined, on Saturday, the 8th day of February, at Guildhall, when the several parties were publicly heard, and both the Doctor and Robinson sent to Wood-Street Compter.

Dr. Dodd was no sooner taken into custody, than his miserable situation appeared to him in all its horrors. He acted on the first charge, not like a man hackneyed in the ways of wickedness, but like one surpris'd into guilt, and roused to a sense of his condition. He made no attempt to exculpate himself, at the expence of truth, but freely acknowledged his crime; and absolutely acquitted Mr. Robinson of any participation in it. He refunded all the money and securities which remained in his possession, and assigned effects sufficient to secure Mess. Fletcher and Peach from any loss which they could possibly sustain. Indeed, all the principals seemed so well satisfied with his behaviour, that no one of them was willing to prosecute him; he therefore earnestly begged to be dismissed. The perturbations of his spirits were such, that his defence was broken and un-

D

connected.

connected. The several complainants, were, however, bound over to prosecute ; and both he and Robinson conducted to prison, through crowds of witnesses to his disgrace, who were no less concerned than astonished, at the dreadful situation, in which he had involved himself.

Thus was this unhappy convict fallen from the summit of respect, esteem and admiration, to the lowest degree of wretchedness and misery. Veneration was now changed to contempt. His friends, could only, in silence, lament his fate ; and those who disliked him, from prejudice, envy or resentment gave full scope to invective and detraction. His crime was not only exaggerated, but things were laid to his charge, of which he was innocent. This one act of criminality seemed to have effaced all his former acts of goodness and humanity.—But when the passions of men began to cool, their language was also changed. They commiserated his situation, lamented his weakness, and thought him a deserved object of mercy.

At the ensuing sessions at the Old Bailey, a bill of indictment was preferred against him ; and on Saturday, the 24th of February, he was arraigned. Previous to the finding of the bill, application had been made to the court ; for leave to bring Robinson before the Grand Jury, to give his testimony ; but this request was refused. However, either by mistake or collusion, an order was obtained from the proper officer, and Robinson was examined. To this proceeding, the Doctor, by his counsel, excepted ; and, after much altercation, in the course of which, the conduct of the clerk of the arraigns, was severely reprobated : it was allowed, that the fact should be stated specially, and the opinion of the judges taken upon it.—

Upon

Upon this circumstance, it has been observed, that, as satisfaction had been made to the principals, the prosecution was carried on with much greater rigour, than might have been expected; especially, as the Doctor had it in his power effectually to have quashed the prosecution, if he had had recollection enough, to have demanded the bond when he had restored the money, which had been fraudulently obtained upon it.

In his defence, he said, that he was affected with a deep sense of the malignity of his crime, in such a commercial state as ours; that as the moral turpitude of it, consisted in the intention, he hoped he was entitled to some lenity, from the consideration, that no fraud was eventually designed, but that he had firmly resolved to restore the money in a few months, and that at present, he had done all in his power to make full and perfect amends; that, therefore, as no man had sustained any injury, he begged that his case might be considered in its true state of clemency; that he had been prosecuted after the most solemn assurances, by Mr. Manley, the attorney, that he should not be hurt; that a person avowedly criminal in the same indictment with himself, had been produced as a capable witness against him; that life, after the present load of obloquy, with which he had been oppressed, was of little value; but that he had ties of a tender nature which rendered him desirous of prolonging his miserable existence; that he had a wife, who for twenty-seven years had lived an unparalled example of conjugal attachment; that he had creditors, honest men, who would lose much by his death; and that, for their sakes, he hoped some mercy would be shewn to him. — He was, however, found *guilty*.

In

In the interval between this and the sessions which began in May, the judges met; and, after conferring together, determined that the evidence of Robinson was competent and admissible. With this opinion he was acquainted by judge Aston, at the opening of the ensuing sessions, that he might be prepared for the consequence at the close of it. He said, that he was fully satisfied, with the justice of their lordships opinion.

On Friday the 26th of May, he was again brought to the bar in order to receive sentence, when, being asked what he had to alledge, why judgment should not be pronounced against him, he addressed the court in so pathetic a manner, as drew tears from the eyes of all present. He pleaded his services, as a minister of the gospel, in discharging of which sacred office, he hoped, that he had neither been *idle* nor *useless*; but that, of his numerous auditors, some had been *preserved* from sin, and some had been *reclaimed*; that a great part of his life had passed in exciting and exercising charity; in relieving such distresses as he now felt; and in administering those consolations, which he now wanted, “ It may seem strange, said he, that remembering what I have lately been, I should still wish to continue what I am. But, contempt of death, how speciously soever it might mingle with heathen virtues, has nothing in it suitable to christian penitence. Many motives impel me to beg earnestly for life. I feel the natural horror of a violent death, and the universal dread of untimely dissolution.

From which it has been inferred by some, that he, who, as a divine, had used arguments against the fears of death, was himself afraid to die. But let it be considered, that an ignominious death, is of all others

others the most terrible; and what criminal has not wished to avoid it. Not to mention that inherent desire in man for the prolongation of life, he might have requested a longer continuance of it. in order to repent of the crimes he had committed, and of the errors of his past conduct by an exemplary reformation; and by meditation and contrition, to have prepared himself for the awful tribunal of omnipotence and for the presence of the judge of the universe. But his meeting death with composure and fortitude, is a sufficient answer to these conjectures.

The recorder, after a previous address, passed the usual sentence. He told him that he appeared to entertain a very proper sense of the enormity of the offence which he had committed; that he appeared too, in a state of contrition of mind; and that he had, he doubted not, duly reflected, how far the dangerous tendency of the offence, he had been guilty of, was encreased by the influence of example, in being committed by a person of his character, and of the sacred function of which he was a member. He observed, that his application for mercy must be made else where; that it would be cruel in the court to flatter him; that there was a power of dispensing, where he might apply.

Numerous indeed have been the applications to the throne, in behalf of this unfortunate man. Their number, the quality of the petitioners, and the earnestness of their requests, are unparalled in the annals of this country; all of which must make his example the more striking, and be a convincing proof that *forgery* is an unpardonable crime in this kingdom.— Nothing can be a stronger proof of the public esteem in which Doctor Dodd was held, than the petition
from

from the city of London, one of the first commercial cities in the world. The petitions from the inhabitants of Westham and St. Olave, are proofs, that his behaviour to his flock had been irreproachable, and that they had no small degree of regard for their pastor.—His jurors also felt for his situation, and implored his majesty to pardon him. Several thousands in and about London, united their prayers and petitions, that sentence of death might not be executed upon him.

He employed the interval of time, from his receiving sentence, to the day of execution, in prayer and meditation; and if his repentance was short, it is to be hoped, it was sincere. And that he was perfectly resigned to his fate, and not only endeavoured to prepare himself, but his fellow convict, for that day of trial, when they were to bid a solemn farewell to this world and all its transient enjoyments. To this purpose, he composed a very serious and pertinent address, which, with much fervour and humiliation, he delivered to them on Friday, the 6th of June, in the chapel of Newgate. If there is a time, when a man speaks what he really feels, it must be in such a situation as this. As far as can be judged from the outward behaviour, his sentiments were the result of conviction;—his sorrow was unfeigned; and he addressed his unhappy auditors, in a language which flowed from the heart. His thoughts, therefore, may be supposed to make some impression on those who heard them.

It had been said, that his behaviour in gaol had been very trifling, and his employment very improper for a man in his wretched situation.—But that was a groundless calumny, as appears from his digesting and improving a book of Devotions, written by Ros-
fel,

fel, for the use of prisoners ; which he recommended to be published under the sanction of the corporation of London ; and he wished that his short address to his unhappy fellow-prisoners, might be prefixed to the work ; as, from the sad singularity of his unhappy circumstances, it may gain more attention from them, than the much better labours of another person.

During his confinement, a torrent of letters poured in upon him, partly from religious sensible people ; partly from well-meaning persons, who had more zeal than knowledge. Books, of very different contents were sent to him ; so that he had such a collection of different systems of doctrine, intruded upon him, as were sufficient to distress and perplex any human Being. He was also visited by persons of very different sentiments and complexions ; among these, were Mr. Wesley, and Mr. Romaine, of whom he spoke very respectfully ; and from the latter, he acknowledged, to have received peculiar comfort. He frequently appeared to have a deep sense of his past offences ; lamented, with tears, the dishonour he had brought upon religion, and upon that sacred function ; and declared, with great emotion, that if he could wipe off the offence, he would gladly submit to the greatest tortures ; and would rather die, than return into the world again, to offend his God, and act inconsistent with his Holy Will,

The day before his execution, he mentioned to the ordinary, what a day of trial it would be, as he must, on that day, take a final leave of his dear wife, to whom he had been married twenty-seven years, and who had been remarkably affectionate to him throughout that period. In the evening, after the interview, he said,—*Now the bitterness of death is over!*

over! *I am ready!* He acknowledged, that Mrs. Dodd behaved, on the occasion, better than he could have expected:—*we parted*, he said, *as those who hope to meet again.* He declared his readiness to die, and that he put his whole confidence in the merits of his Lord and Saviour.

On the morning of his death, the ordinary went to him, with the Rev. Mr. Dobey, chaplain of the Magdalen, whom he had desired to attend him to the place of execution; he appeared composed; and said, that he had some comfortable sleep, by which he should be better enabled to perform his duty. When they were in the vestry, adjoining to the chapel, he exhorted his fellow-sufferer, (who had attempted to destroy himself), with great tenderness, and emotion of heart, entreating him to consider, that he had but a short time to live, and that it was highly necessary, that he, as well as himself, should make good use of his time, to implore pardon of God, under a deep sense of sin, and look up to that Lord, by whose Merits alone, sinners could be saved. His conversation to this poor youth, was so moving, that tears flowed from the eyes of all present.

When he went into the chapel to prayers and the Holy Communion, true contrition and warmth of devotion, appeared evident in him, throughout the whole service.

After waiting some time for the officers, he asked what o'clock it was, and being told it was half an hour after eight, he said,—*I wish they were ready, for I long to be gone.*

Just before the sheriff's officers came with the halters, he was told, that he must pass through a little solemnity, before he went out; he asked,—“*What is that?*”—“*You will be bound.*”—He looked up, and said,—

said,—*Yet am I free, my freedom is there.* He bore it with christian patience. After he was bound, the ordinary offered to assist him with his arm, in conducting him through the yard, but he replied.—*No ! I'm as firm as a rock !* As he passed along the yard, the spectators and prisoners wept and bemoaned him ; and he in return, prayed God to bless them.

On the way to execution, he consoled himself in reflecting and speaking of what Christ had suffered for him ; lamented the depravity of human nature, which made sanguinary laws necessary ; and said, he could gladly have died in the prison-yard, as being led out to public execution, greatly distressed him.

When he came near the street, where he formerly dwelt, he was much affected, and wept. He said, probably his tears would seem to be the effect of cowardice, but it was a weakness he could not help ; and added, he hoped he was going to a better home.

When he arrived at the fatal tree, he ascended the cart, and spoke much to his fellow-sufferer. He then prayed, not only for himself, but also for his wife, and for the unfortunate youth, that suffered with him ; and declaring that he died in the true faith of the Gospel of Christ, in perfect love and charity with all mankind, and with thankfulness to his friends, he was launched into eternity, imploring mercy for his soul, for the sake of his Blessed Redeemer.

He delivered to the Ordinary the following declaration.

E

DOCTOR

DOCTOR DODD'S

LAST

SOLEMN DECLARATION.

TO the words of dying men regard has always been paid. I am brought hither to suffer death for an act of fraud, of which I confess myself guilty with shame, such as my former state of life naturally produces, and I hope with such sorrow as He, to whom the heart is known, will not disregard. I repent that I have violated the laws by which peace and confidence are established among men; I repent that I have attempted to injure my fellow-creatures; and I repent that I have brought disgrace upon my order, and discredit upon religion: but my offences against God are without name and number, and can admit only of general confession and general repentance.—Grant almighty God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, that my repentance, however late, however imperfect, may not be in vain.

The

The little good that now remains in my power, is to warn others against those temptations by which I have been seduced. I have always sinned against conviction; my principles have never been shaken; I have always considered the Christian religion as a revelation from God, and its divine Author as the Saviour of the world, but the laws of God, tho' never disowned by me, have often been forgotten. I was led astray from religious strictness by the delusion of shew and the delights of voluptuousness. I never knew or attended to the calls of frugality, or the needful minuteness of painful oeconomy. Vanity and pleasure, into which I plunged, required expence disproportionate to my income; expence brought distress upon me, and distress, importunate distress, urged me to temporary fraud.

For this fraud I am to die; and I die declaring in the most solemn manner, that however I have deviated from my own precepts, I have taught others, to the best of my knowledge, and with all sincerity, the true way to eternal happiness. My life, for some few unhappy years past, has been dreadfully erroneous, but my ministry has been always sincere. I have constantly believed, and I now leave the world

world solemnly avowing my conviction, that there is no other name under Heaven by which we can be saved, but only the name of the Lord Jesus; and I entreat all who are here to join with me in my last petition, that, for the sake of that Lord Jesus Christ, my sins may be forgiven, and my soul received into his everlasting kingdom.

WILLIAM DODD.

June 27, 1777.

The dark scene, which has so lately engaged our attention is now closed; nature, reason, and religion sickens at the remembrance. And now that he is dead let the tongue of scandal be silent. He has suffered for his offence; he has forgiven his enemies, and now rests in hope for forgiveness himself. But let his fatal exit, be a dreadful caution to the world, how they indulge in vanities, voluptuousness and expensive pleasures. Oeconomy is a virtue too much neglected in these dissipated times, but it is a virtue which ought to be more inculcated than it generally is; whereas false notions of generosity have induced many people to laugh it out of countenance. By a contrary conduct, this unhappy divine, who might have been an ornament to his profession, has given cause of triumph to the enemies of christianity, who are too much inclined to vilify that religion, where
precepts

precepts are so notoriously disregarded. But these precepts are not the less valuable, because they lose their influence in a corrupt and degenerate age. When men are brought by vice into sorrow and distress ; then are they impressed with a sensible conviction of its tendency, and are convinced, that a religious life not only has the promise of happiness, hereafter but produces peace, contentment and satisfaction even in this world.

F I N I S.



